

HOW TO... Paint a rainbow

If you're feeling under the weather, Adam Banks knows a way to put some colour in your day. Use Corel Paint Shop Pro to perk up the dreariest skyline instantly

At this time of year, you can't rely on the weather to brighten up your photos. A rainbow can make a grey sky more cheerful, and adding one in your image editor is much more convenient than capturing one with your camera. Here's how to do it in Corel Paint Shop Pro X. If you have other software, the method will differ. Users of Photoshop Elements should refer to the 'At a glance' box on the right.

1 Start Corel Paint Shop Pro X and open your photo. Click on the Background and Fill Properties swatch at the top right of the Materials palette. If you can't see the palette, select it from Palettes on the View menu. In the Material Properties dialog box, click on the Gradient tab. Under Style select the third option, Sunburst. Click on the triangle to the right of the swatch above this to show a list of presets and choose Rainbow.

2 This gradient has the seven colours of the spectrum, but the wrong way round. Tick the box next to Invert to switch them. Then click Edit. In the Gradient Editor, click Save As and enter a new name such as 'My rainbow'. Look at the Gradient scale. Each colour has a Stop that you can move left or right.

3 Not all the gradient will be visible when you apply it to a circle; in Paint Shop Pro, only about 70 per cent appears. With Invert, this is the last 70 per cent on the scale. So move your first colour, red, to the 30 per cent position. Either drag the red Stop until the Location box

shows 30% or click on the Stop and type 30 into the box. Move the other colours to follow on as closely as possible. Again, you can click on each Stop then enter the next Location: 31, 32 and so on. Keep the colours in the correct order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.

4 You should end up with violet at 36 per cent. If you have any Stops you don't need, drag them off the scale. Finally, make the gradient fade off at the right. Click on the right-hand Stop on the Transparency scale, which is located below the Gradient scale, and type 0 (zero) into the Opacity box on the left. Set Location to 38. Click the left-hand Transparency Stop and set its Location to 36. Its Opacity box will be set to 100. Click Close, and when asked if you want to save your changes click Yes. Click OK in the Material Properties dialog box.

5 Select the Ellipse Vector Shape tool, the third of the pop-out icons on the fourth button from last in the main toolbox, or press the Q key. In the Options toolbar, click the circle icon under Mode and tick Create On Vector. Holding the Ctrl key to draw from the centre, click at horizon level on one side of the photo. Drag up and across to draw a large circle. Click Edit, Undo, or press Ctrl-Z, and redraw as necessary to get it looking right. You may need to zoom out by rolling the mouse wheel.

In the Layers palette (also accessible from View, Palettes) your circle's layer, Vector 1, is highlighted. Using the controls above this, change its blending mode from Normal to Soft



PHOTOSHOP GRADIENTS AT A GLANCE

- In Photoshop Elements 4, gradients can be drawn directly on an image using the Gradient tool. Select this from the main toolbox, or press G, then click on the gradient swatch in the Options toolbar. Choose the Default set of gradients from the pop-up menu. Pick the penultimate swatch, Transparent Rainbow.
- Click Edit to adjust the gradient. Leaving the red Stop where it is, drag the sliders to bunch up the other colours. Transparency is controlled by the white, black and grey Opacity Stops; bunch these up similarly at each end of your narrow spectrum. Click OK. Under Options, select Radial Gradient and tick Reverse. Transparency should also be ticked.
- Add a new layer by pressing Shift-Ctrl-N. In the Layers palette, change its mode from Normal to Soft Light. With the Gradient tool active, drag to draw your rainbow, as in Step 5. Remove the unwanted part, as in Step 6.

Light and reduce its opacity to 50 per cent. Then go to Adjust, Blur, Gaussian Blur. Click OK to convert the vector shape to a normal layer; its name changes to Raster 1. Set Radius to around 12 and click OK.

6 Finally, remove the unwanted part of the rainbow. Choose the Selection tool, the third icon in the toolbox, or press S. Set the Selection type to Rectangular. Draw around the lower part of the photo and press Delete.

